

HEPATITIS A VACCINE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

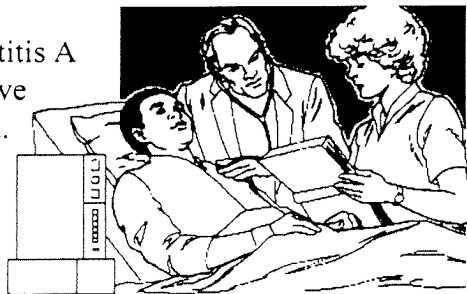
1 What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is found in the stool of persons with hepatitis A. It is usually spread by close personal contact and sometimes by eating food or drinking water containing HAV.

Hepatitis A can cause:

- mild “flu-like” illness
- jaundice (yellow skin or eyes)
- severe stomach pains and diarrhea

People with hepatitis A infection often have to be hospitalized. In rare cases, hepatitis A causes death.



A person who has hepatitis A can easily pass the disease to others within the same household.

Hepatitis A vaccine can prevent hepatitis A.

2

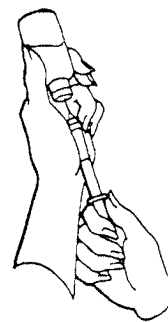
Who should get hepatitis A vaccine and when?

- Persons 2 years of age and older traveling or working in countries with high rates of hepatitis A, such as those located in Central or South America, the Caribbean, Mexico, Asia (except Japan), Africa, and southern or eastern Europe. *The vaccine series should be started at least one month before traveling.*
- Persons who live in communities that have prolonged outbreaks of hepatitis A.

- Persons who live in communities with high rates of hepatitis A: for example, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander communities and some religious communities.
- Men who have sex with men.
- Persons who use street drugs.
- Persons with chronic liver disease.
- Persons who receive clotting factor concentrates.

Two doses of the vaccine, given at least 6 months apart, are needed for lasting protection.

Hepatitis A vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines.



3

Some people should not get hepatitis A vaccine or should wait

People who have ever had a serious allergic reaction to a previous dose of hepatitis A vaccine should not get another dose.

People who are mildly ill at the time the shot is scheduled should get hepatitis A vaccine. People with moderate or severe illnesses should usually wait until they recover. Your doctor or nurse can advise you.

The safety of hepatitis A vaccine for pregnant women is not yet known. But any risk to either the pregnant woman or the fetus is thought to be very low.

Ask your doctor or nurse for details.